

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00
NSCE-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03
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FM AMCONSUL HAMBURG
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4786
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
USMISSION BERLIN
AMCONSUL BREMEN
AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF
AMCONSUL FRANKFURT
AMCONSUL MUNICH
AMCONSUL STUTTGART

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, GW
SUBJECT: STATE ELECTIONS IN HAMBURG AND LOWER SAXONY

1. SUMMARY: THE POLLS HAD THE TREND RIGHT BUT THEY
UNDERESTIMATED THE DEGREE TO WHICH THE FDP HAS LOST
SUPPORT. IN HAMBURG THE SPD HAS WON A COMFORTABLE
MAJORITY; IN HANNOVER THE CDU HAS DONE THE SAME. THE
FDP HAS DISAPPEARED FROM BOTH PARLIAMENTS. END SUMMARY.

2. HAMBURG RESULTS (BUERGESCHAFT SEATS IN PARENTHSES);

	1978 (PERCENT)	1976 BUNDESTAG (PERCENT)	1974 (PERCENT)
SPD	51.5 (69)	52.6	44.9 (56)
CDU	37.6 (51)	35.9	40.6 (51)

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FDP	4.8 (0)	10.2	10.9 (13)
COLORFUL			
LIST	3.5	-	-
DKP	1.0	0.8	2.2
NPD	0.3	0.2	0.8

3. LOWER SAXONY RESULTS (LANDTAG SEATS IN PARENTHSESES)

	1978 (PERCENT)	1976 BUNDESTAG (PERCENT)	1974 (PERCENT)
CDU	48.7 (83)	45.7	48.8 (77)
SPD	42.2 (72)	45.7	43.1 (67)
FDP	4.2 (0)	7.9	7.0 (11)
GREEN			
LIST	3.9	-	-
DKP	0.3	0.2	-
NPD	0.4	0.3	-

4. COMMENT: THE MAJOR SURPRISE OF THESE ELECTIONS WAS THE FDP'S FAILURE TO CLEAR THE 5 PERCENT HURDLE IN HAMBURG WHERE FOUR YEARS AGO IT HAD ACHIEVED 10.9 PERCENT. THE CAUSE OF THE LOSS, MUCH OF IT TO THE MAVERICK ENVIRONMENTALISTS OF THE COLORFUL LIST, CAN BE EXPLAINED ALMOST ENTIRELY BY THE INEPT PECULIARITIES OF THE HAMBURG FDP WHICH IS CONSIDERABLY TO THE LEFT OF ITS COALITION PARTNER, THE SPD. THE DEGREE OF THE LOSS WILL NEVERTHELESS HAVE SERIOUS, IF AS YET VAGUE, REPERCUSSIONS FOR THE NATIONAL PARTY BUT WHATEVER THE FDP'S HAMBURG DISASTER MIGHT MEAN FOR THE BONN COALITION HAS BEEN CONFUSED BY THE FDP'S FURTHER FAILURE TO REACH 5 PERCENT IN LOWER SAXONY WHERE IT IS IN COALITION WITH THE CDU. IT'S LOWER SAXONY LOSSES WERE LESS (AND MOSTLY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TO THE CDU) THAN IN HAMBURG BUT THAT WILL GIVE SCANT COMFORT TO THOSE IN THE CDU WHO WERE HOPING TO TEMPT GENSCHER INTO A COALITION IN BONN WITH THE CDU THIS YEAR. THEREFORE, WHATEVER THE NATIONAL POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES OF THESE ELECTIONS MAY BE WILL PROBABLY NOT TAKE SHAPE UNTIL AFTER THE ELECTION IN HESSE IN OCTOBER, BY WHICH TIME GENSCHER WILL STILL NOT HAVE FORGOTTEN THAT WHILE THE CDU SOUGHT TO BE HELPFUL TO THE FDP IN LOWER SAXONY (FOR ITS OWN REASONS, OF COURSE) IT WAS THE EXPRESSED WISH OF THE SPD IN HAMBURG TO DO THE FDP IN.

6. THESE ELECTIONS DO GIVE THE CDU/CSU AND "UNTAINTED" MAJORITY -- I.E., EVEN WITHOUT THE SAAR WHERE THE CDU IS IN COALITION WITH THE FDP -- IN THE BUNDESRAT. THEY ALSO MEAN THAT SCHMIDT'S COALITION PARTNER GENSCHER WILL BE BOTH WEAKER AND PROBABLY MORE UNPREDICTABLE. THEY WERE PERSONAL TRIUMPHS FOR ALBRECHT IN LOWER SAXONY AND KLOSE IN HAMBURG AND GIVE EACH A NATIONAL PROMINENCE HE DID NOT HAVE BEFORE -- AS BOTH ARE YOUNG, INTELLIGENT, AND POLITICALLY GIFTED THEY MAY WELL BE ACTIVE FOR A LONG TIME TO COME. (IT WILL BE INTERES-

TING TO SEE HOW KLOSE HANDLES HIS LEFT WING NOW THAT
HE CAN NO LONGER USE THE FDP AS A POLITICAL FOIL)
OVER THE NEXT FOUR YEARS IN MAY BE DIFFICULT.)

7. IN SUM THE VOTERS IN BOTH HAMBURG AND LOWER SAXONY
CHOSE CONSERVATIVE COMPETENCE AND SHIFTED SOME OF THE
BITS AND PIECES FROM THE FDP TO THE NON-COMMUNIST
FRINGES ON THE LEFT. KISELYAK

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